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THE CHARGE

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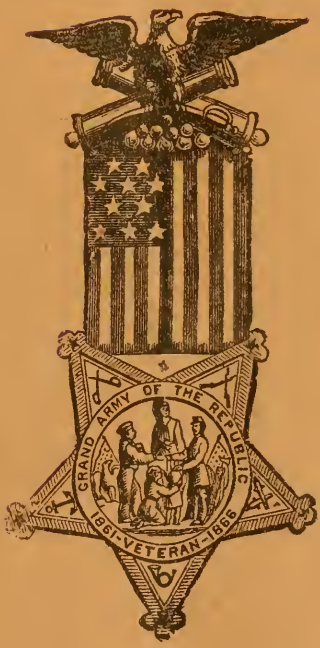

Barlow

BEAN BRIGADE.

THE

Charge of the Bean Brigade:

A

HUMOROUS DESCRIPTION

OF THE

Grand Bean-Eating Tournament

FOR THE

TONAWANDA NEWS GOLD BADGE

AND

CHAMPIONSHIP OF NEW YORK,

AT TONAWANDA, APRIL 15, 1884.

Under the auspices of Scott Post No. 129, G. A. R.

IN

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JOHN R. BARLOW.

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Charge of the Bean Brigade.

For years among the savants
It was a mooted theme
Whether as a fruit or berry,
Should be classed the goodly bean;
But while the question lingered
In controversial mist,
It was mustered in the Army,
Upon the ration list.

A staple dish it soon became,
And claimed the soldier's care,
Whate'er he lacked, be sure the bean
Still graced his bill of fare.
Or east or west, on land or sea,
Howe'er the diet changed,
The soldier and his dish of beans
Was never yet estranged.

In Old Virginia's sandy groves
Where Potomac glides free,
Or where the Cumberland winds 'mong
The hills of Tennessee,
Or where the mighty Mississip
Down gulfward takes his course,
Where'er the soldier went, his beans
Must follow him perforce.

In camp, or field, or hospital,
Howe'er his steps might bend,
Still there to meet his hungry need
The bean his steps attend;
And even if to prison pen,
War's fortune did pursue,
Though meagre be the fare displayed,
The bean he still might view.

And when you con historic page
For valorous deeds, be sure
The solid bean took form in that
Which nerved him to endure
The weary march, the sleepless nights,
The long contested field,
That stubborn will which made him die
But would not let him yield.

And many a hardy veteran
Can yet a tale unfold
Of midnight raid, of rush and rout,
Of open charge more bold,
Of fair matched field, hard fought and won
By no unseemly means,
But just because their breakfast had
Been made on Pork and Beans.

But when the cruel war was o'er,
The boys came home in glee,
Proud of their triumph, glad again
To feel that they were free;
They left behind war's bloody field,
Its triumphs and its woes,
To seek again as citizens,
In private life, repose.

Forgotten bivouac, camp and march,
Forgot the battle's roar,
Forgotten everything in joy
Of seing home once more;
And, oh, that I should thus proclaim,
'Mong sweet home coming scenes,
Their hearts for once turned traitor when
They all forgot their beans.

But not for long, that could not be,
Though tempting dainties graced
Each sumptuous table laid for them,
By fitting welcome traced;
For still through all the grand *menu*
Of viands rich and rare,
The thought o'erpowering forced itself
Of something lacking there.

Then each one took himself to task,
To seek the unknown cause,
Why groaning plenty could not fill
Their gorged, insatiate maws.
At length a morning beam of thought
Was flashed upon the scene,
And every soldier woke to find
He missed his Army Bean.

Then hungry longing filled his heart,
And scarce could he refrain
Till willing housewife had prepared
The longed for dish again.
But why that disappointed look,
Which flits across his face?
In every line and feature now
Dissatisfaction trace.

The beans were there, but yet for all
They did not meet with favor,
For oh they could not fill the bill,
They lacked the "Army flavor."
Then each to each his trouble told,
And as the tale they hearkened,
Still more intense the longing grew,
And more their faces darkened.

Then once a squad of veterans met,
And bold was their resolve,
The severing breach of former rank
Thenceforward to dissolve,
If but once more, as oft of yore,
Remembering other scenes,
The could again together cook
And eat their dish of beans.

From this resolve so firm and bold
What rich return is seen,
If soldiers ever swear at all
They should swear by the bean;
For from that wish and that resolve,
Sprang every veteran's boast,
All hail the heroes! for they were
The first Grand Army Post.

And soon in emulative zeal
Sprang up on every hand
Post after Post, till myraids now
Are scattered through the land;
And in remembrance of the days
Grown dear with passing time,
In every Post the arms are stacked,
And ruddy camp-fires shine.

And ever in the camp-fires' glow,
While joyful comrades meet,
The laden table gives them cheer,
They drink and smoke and eat;
And rest assured, no camp-fire now
To bring full joy were able,
Unless in royal state appeared
The Beans upon the table.

And round each fire be sure appears
Some hard-shell story-teller,
Who claims that he can eat more beans
Than any other "feller";
And this assertion to confirm,
Tells guttapercha stories,
Of other Comrades floored, while he,
Still in his triumph glories.

Now that would do, were all content
To sit and listen to it,
And think, to hear the fellow spout,
That may be he could do it,
But when a score or so, you know,
Of other chaps concluded
That they could wrestle Pork and Beans,
And would not be deluded

Into the thought that there was aught
Of gastronomic mention,
Endowed to shine in this same line
Beyond their stomach's tension,
Why, then, you see, there's bound to be
Fun, rushing and uproarous,
While every comrade's claim fills in
The double shotted chorus.

Now this is how we found the case
When Huggins told his stories,
And claimed how often he'd come off
Triumphant and victorious.
For Goodrich would not have it so,
And Fisher, he declared
That he could eat more beans himself
Than ever Huggins dared.

Then from the City of the Locks
A warlike cry comes ringing,
And Palmer claims that he, as yet,
The fork and spoon is swinging.
Then from Suspension Bridge a yell,
"Hold on! this is no straggler!"
"Hello!" says Low, "Why, don't you know
That I am here? and Flagler?"

And borne upon the rushing breeze,
A voice comes o'er the distance,
From Akron far, as note of war,
And Richards makes resistance.
But yet again, a louder strain,
Lord help the lungs that risk it,
From Buffalo the breezes blow,
And Stambach claims the biscuit.

And from Chautauqua's crystal lake,
Where Godly hosts are camping,
Loud, Colburn sends a greeting grim,
His former triumphs vaunting.
And from Ontario's pebbly shore,
Another echo waking,
High o'er the surge, Stout sounds the dirge
That sets bean eaters quaking.

Loud rang the cry on every side,
Contention still grew warmer,
Each sought the controversial war
Encased in wordy armor;
And none would yield contested field,
And many bouts were numbered,
Yet still upon contested ground
The mooted question slumbered.

Until at length, oh, happy thought!
The Tonawanda *News* Man,
With mighty heart, and loth to see
Man wantonly abuse man,
Conceived a glorious plan, to which
His energies all bending,
Proclaimed a mighty Tournament
To give the question ending.

And as in famous jousts of old
The Prince's guerdon rises,
With lavish hand and purse prepared
For winning Knighthood, prizes:
The first a Golden Badge to grace
The gormandizing sinner
Who, from that memorable fray
Should rise acknowledged winner.

And prizes were prepared for those
Who fastest ate, and slowest,
Another prize for him whose beans
In quantity stood lowest;
And one for him most graceful in
This model mode of charging,
And one for Knight most awkwardly
Accomplishing his gorging.

Then loud the herald's voice was heard,
Through all the land proclaiming
The glorious fact, the very date
The day of Tournay naming.
Then rose the mighty of the land,
Famed for prodigious eating,
And vowed they'd gird their armor on
And triumph at the meeting.

Bright rose the sun; his beams shone on
A glorious day for Tournay;
But not on burnished shield or spear,
They didn't do it that way;
But where the lamps of evening shone,
For such affair more fitted,
Around a gay and festive board
Were Knights contending pitted.

And these are they who came that day
To eat their way to glory,
To trace their names upon the page
Of future fame and story:
First, Tonawanda, loath to lose
The Badge in such a hurry,
Builds high her hopes to win upon
Her Baker and her Murray.

Her Goodrich entered in the lists,
In hopes to vanquish Huggins,
But when Doc. failed to come to time,
He called the game on muggins;
And said he could not lend himself
To any such connival,
If Doc. withdrew his gage, why he'd
Not tilt with other rival.

But Lockport, sure to win the badge—
In confidence they tell us—
As doughty champions they advance
Their Ticknor and their Ellis;
Lest peradventure they might meet
Knights worthy of their mettle,
They send their Palmer, never yet
Unhorsed in such a battle.

From where Chautauqua's purest air
O'er Kennedy blows freely,
In fittest form for such affray,
Comes Colburn, Clark and Ely.
And Akron, bent to yet *cement*
The Badge upon her standard,
Her Richards and her Goslin sends
To represent her van-guard.

From Buffalo a voice is heard
Enquiring, "Wa's'er mas'er?
We're bound to "get that Badge, you bet!"
We've sent down Mathew Wasser."
Sends Hartland, Healand; Olcott, Stout;
And Albion, Herdendorf;
And Clarence sends Prince Humbert down
To sweep the honors off.

And from the Hub of all the hubs,
Where beans are not a dainty,
But held a Sunday morning feast
And handed round in plenty;
Comes Garvie, subsidized and sent
To Tonawanda's Tournay;
The unknown Knight, with spotless shield,
For triumph made the journey.

Now all prepared, the beans were weighed
And duly handed round,
On trusty scales that tipped each plate
Exactly at a pound;
And by consent of tilting Knights,
To guide the glittering maze,
Lord Goodrich mounts the dias throne,
The Prince's Standard sways.

The Charge.

As on the dias, Goodrich stood,
And marked each warrior's eager mood,
With fork-lance poised on high,
He noted well each heaving breast
That burned to do his level best,
To rise triumphant from the test
The pride of every eye.
He marked the timepiece on the wall,
To catch the moment he might call
The slogan cry: Upon them all!
Let every fork-lance fly!
And eager breathed the waiting throng,
As slow the moments creep along
That bridges o'er the time;

But now, but now, each couchant lance
In gleaming lights doth quivering glance,
The moment comes sublime.

Forward!—The words rang loud and high.
Charge!—It was the old war eagle cry.
And not a veteran made reply,
But lightning gleaming in his eye
Looked where the beans were laid.
The rattle of the spoon and fork,
The flourished knife above the pork,
Showed well the rush of hottest work,
Where first the charge was made.
Now to the charge! stand back! stand back!
Let pacing sentries clear the track
And give them elbow room.
Now see them ride, and turn, and wheel,
While foemen worthy of their steel
The glories of the moment feel
That lights them to their doom.

Now o'er the field with dash and skur,
With tightened rein and active spur,
Ride madly on to meet the shock,
Then clash, and in their saddles rock;
Then wheel, and turn, and clash again,

While o'er the now resounding plain,
Rings out the cry of Knight and 'Squire.
And still their crys ring high, and higher,
And lance and shield in contact come,
And lance-shafts bend, and whir, and hum,
And tremble in the hand.
Then on again! see Palmer ride,
While Baker gallops at his side;
See Ellis, eager, bending low,
His breast upon his saddle bow,
His lance poised in his hand.

See Wasser charge a gallant knight,
Draw blood and sicken at the sight,
His Esquire's cheek too, blanching white
To feel they cannot win.
Hear Clark and Ely's rallying cry,
See Garvie's lance untrammeled fly,
See Richards with brave Humbert vie,
Hear Stout above the din.
Now hotter still the tilts become,
At ring of bugle, beat of drum,
And once again the lances fly;
There breaks a lance; no more will try
Prince Humbert for the prize.
See Ely reel and writhe with pain;
And Richards ne'er will fight again
Where Stout the tilting tries.

Now spur and lance, give o'er, give o'er;
And turn, and wheel, and charge no more
Till time be called again;
But let each Knight at once repair
To sylvan shade, and tarry there
Till they their wind shall gain.

Now rest ye gallant Knights, who from
The first bout doth so gaily come.
What? Palmer! are you still so fresh
That o'er the field you gaily dash?
Oh, better save your wind and strength,
You yet may need them ere the length
Of this day's course you run.
See Ellis mount his steed, and show
That he can flap his wings and crow.
Oh, many a Knight as brave as thou,
Who rode as gay as you ride now,
Low in the dust did helmet bow
Ere yet the day was done.

Now on again! for time is cried;
Now boldly charge, and gaily ride;
This bout your mettle will have tried
Yet harder than the first.
They ride and charge with might and main,

Then turn, and wheel, and charge again,
And Knights unhorsed upon the plain
Lie groaning like to burst.
There Ticknor falls; there Healand, too;
And Herdendorf is lost to view;
And Schopf is down as well.
There ride! for if to win, they must
Ride through the rolling clouds of dust,
There Clark and Ellis fell.

Ride lightly now; the bout is o'er;
Skur to the woods and blow once more,
Get all the wind you can;
You've bravely done, still bravely do,
Those who another bout go through
Unhorsed, unscathed, may stand a show
To be the winning man.
But many a one shall weep for this,
And hand on stomach wildly press;
And many a form in colic bent
Shall groan to give his feelings vent;
And whistling of the balls now spent
Shall fall upon the ear;
And o'er the field shall sweep the wind,
And many a groan be heard behind,
As bummers search, and relics find
Upon the field of war.

Again! again! spur on! spur on!
As yet the guerdon is not won.
Ride! Baker! ride! See Stout fall back,
Now Garvie follows in the wrack;
For honor of old Boston Town
Ne'er let you gaudy pennant down,
But graceful lead the fray.
See Colburn set his lance in rest,
They loudest cheer who cheer the last,
See how his tilts come thick and fast,
His soul upon the die seems cast,
To charge and win the day.

But, hold! strike not another blow!
Remaining Knights ride easy, now,
Reserve your power, but one more bout,
And he who puts the rest to rout,
Rides Champion from the field.
Breathe long and slow, nor vainly throw
Your strength in useless feats, to show
That your condition's prime;
Of hottest work you'll get your fill:
Then, at it with redoubled will.
When Goodrich last calls time,
Set every muscle, firm and tense,
Tilt hard with lance, and for defence
Turn ready hand and shield.

Now, forward every lance and shield!
The champion rides upon the field;
But every other Knight, full low
Must lie, ere he good claim can show
To guerdon, as his right.
Now, forward, all! on every side!
Ride! Tonawanda's champion's, ride!
On, Murray, on! Charge, Baker, charge!
See Palmer still his belt enlarge,
While Colburn now takes up the targe
To triumph in the fight.
Oh, never let the tale be told,
That Tonawanda's champions bold,
Had forms so shrunk, they could not hold
The winning plate of beans.

Wail! for bean-eating Boston Town;
At last her graceful champion's down.
Wail! Wasser, lost for Buffalo;
By Colburn's sturdy, trenchard blow,
Prone in the dust he lieth low,
And writhing in his pains.
Now, Baker, Murray, side by side,
Against the Colburn turn the tide.
See Palmer striving faintly now,
But ere he falls, one desperate blow,
And Murray's triumph wanes.

Now, Baker, every nerve employ,
And prove thyself no stripling boy,
Charge on the Colburn! once for all;
Or you or he, this tilt must fall;
This latest effort heralds all,
  Or you or he must down.
They charge each other, might and main,
And Colburn's helmet's cleft in twain,
He strives to rally, all in vain,
His steed without a guiding rein
Flees riderless the fatal plain;
  And Baker rides alone,
Triumphant, to the Prince's throne,
And him the Champion, all must own,
For on his brow the laurel thrown
  Proclaims that he has won.

Loud sound the noble champion's praise,
Who thus at home has kept the bays,
To be the theme of many lays
  In ages yet to come.
And old Scott Post need never shirk
From any kind of heavy work,
While such a Knight of spoon and fork
  Calls Tonawanda home.

When all was o'er, and cheers no more
Made roof and rafters ring,
Before the throne Prince Goodrich did
The "Baker Pacha" bring;
And for the fact that he had packed
Six pounds of beans away,
With pride, and care 'twas his to wear
The Champion's Badge for aye.

It boots me not to say aught more,
Nor tell, if I were able,
How Baker, when the tilt was o'er,
Sat down at supper table,
And ate a meal would put to blush
The stomach of a Tramp,
And 'twould be useless, too, to note
The coffee that he drank.

Nor think we there will e'er be cause
To call the Badge in question,
For few would rashly care to test
Such powers of digestion;
Since he has fully proved that none
To wear the Badge is fitter;
And while he lives, Scott Post may claim
The Champion Bean Eater.

I have told the story truly,
As all stories should be told:
'Twill be handed down in glory
Like the famous jousts of old;
And still among the comrades,
Shall the hero's fame unfold,
Till the last survivor answers
To the final "call of roll."

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